

### ENTJ

(About 1.8% of the U.S. population)

Of all the 16 types, ENTJs are the most likely to be cast in *leadership* roles and responsibilities. In fact, these field marshals of the type world are often asked by others to take on leadership tasks. Hearty, argumentative, and robust are three words that accurately describe ENTJs. Their unique preferences combine to give them a very high need for control and unusual leadership abilities.

#### **ENTJ Personality Highlights**

ENTJs understand the value of confrontation, argument, and engaging with another person as a way to grow and learn. They start with the basic assumption that they are right and must be proven wrong. This proving process can be very useful when others have the gumption or audacity required to mount an effective challenge. When the engagement is over, if the ENTJ was right, everyone will be better for having gone through the process. If the ENTJ was wrong, there will be profound admiration and respect for whoever was strong enough to prevail, as well as gratitude for any lessons learned.

- Their **Extraversion** directs their focus and energy outward and gives them social alertness.
- Their **iNtuition** allows them to view a world of possibilities, meanings, and connections.
- Their **Thinking** translates those possibilities into systems and products.
- Their **Judging** provides closure, structure, and accountability, assuring things get done in a timely, orderly fashion.

Life for the ENTJ is a system of forces to be understood, mastered, harnessed, altered, or defeated, as appropriate, from day to day. In some ways they see it as a variation of the children's game King (or Queen) of the Mountain. The goal for others is to try to push the ENTJ off the mountaintop. As long as they are unable to do so, they must remain "beneath" the ENTJ. The process of being challenged is as important to ENTJs as the outcome; they don't understand those (e.g., INFPs) who don't care about or want to play this "game."

Here are some other characteristics. ENTJs...

- Have low regard for people who are intimidated by them and high regard for those who stand up to them and/or challenge them intellectually, emotionally, or in any other way.
- Can be arrogant and not even recognize that they are, although others are keenly aware of it.
- Are often impatient, more so than most other types.
- Have an urgency to move on to bigger and better things.
- Think they can do or handle anything, including details and intense interpersonal matters, even though these are not the ENTJ's strong suits.

**ENTJs in Personal Life**

Relationships can be a significant challenge for ENTJs. When they “fail” at such matters, the resulting stress, frustration, and feelings of incompetence can result in self-criticism, often totally out of proportion to whatever is going on. When it comes to criticism of themselves or others, ENTJs are usually in a class by themselves. Sharp-tongued, harsh, seemingly unforgiving, ENTJs can be devastating to those they criticize. However, their clarity of thought and speech makes them excellent communicators and sharpens their precise critical-thinking abilities.

ENTJs are often told they appear angry, even when they are just intensely enthusiastic about making a point. Such encounters can be surprising and frustrating for ENTJs and those around them. They may find themselves in the rather ironic position of having to angrily defend their non-anger. This can lead to a sense of futility that will make the ENTJ try even harder, or give up and move on to some other project. In either case, the result can be draining for everyone involved.

***ENTJs at Home***

The ENTJ’s home is the arena for all sorts of pursuits. Relationships there tend to be open, honest, and stimulating. While to others ENTJs may seem somewhat abrasive, those who know them well understand that (as with other EJs) their bark is usually worse than their bite. ENTJs expect relationships to grow and develop over time.

Relaxation doesn’t come easily to most ENTJs; when it does, it’s only because it has been scheduled. Even then, it is viewed as one more assignment to master, and they may attack such challenges with zeal and compulsiveness. Family events are fun for the ENTJ. They are yet another chance to plan, organize, lead, and show off. It is a time for intellectual exchanges and robust encounters.

Older age for ENTJs is still a time for mental expansion. They may have more respect for reflection, with less need to control everything and less compulsive behavior. But their later years must still include some form of mental challenge – the more competitive, the better. For the ENTJ, maturity brings opportunities to read, argue, organize, or theorize. Retirement, if it ever comes, will see a continuation of these activities in one form or another.

***ENTJs as Children***

ENTJ children tend to be direct with both their peers and adults. Although they are often bossy and argumentative, they make friends easily, are quick-witted and gregarious, and have strong needs – like other Extraverts (Es) – to include others and be included in everything. In the eyes of their peers, ENTJ children can be simultaneously respected for their capabilities and resented for their obnoxious, overpowering convictions. They rarely rest on their laurels, believing that even the best can be better. In fact, that is how the ENTJ approaches everything.

***ENTJs as Parents***

As parents, ENTJs see children as fun because they are young minds to be encouraged, enlightened, and stimulated. As they grow, their children also become eligible to be drawn into hearty discourse

about a variety of subjects. Children are prime candidates for the molding and shaping that ENTJs like to do when they care about or have responsibility for someone.

ENTJs can have high expectations for their children and may be rather demanding when it comes to academic performance. Because their own leadership skills are often well developed, they may be frustrated if their children do not assume the mantle of leadership also. This is more likely to occur when their children's personality preferences are substantially different from their own.

### **ENTJs in Professional Life**

As Extraverted-Judgers, ENTJs are robust, direct, and hearty strategists. They can quickly and keenly see possibilities in almost everything and act on them instantly. They share their directions and opinions freely and easily, assuming that anyone who disagrees is ready to engage in meaningful, direct, and perhaps confrontational, dialogue. For ENTJs, that is how growth happens and mountains are moved. They believe the communication process is meant to be direct: put different points of view squarely on the table and go head to head until a resolution is reached. This is a very exciting process to ENTJs. When people, things, and entities are moved, removed, changed, or engaged, it's just part of the game of life and it's always meant for the organizational good.

This objective, removed behavior allows ENTJs to become highly involved in many things while never really becoming personally invested in any of them. They can argue (they call it "discuss") any subject with zeal and not be personally hurt by what is said. They may even become annoyed when someone else gets bruised in the process. An ENTJ might listen to another's tale of woe with genuine empathy, and then moments later say something totally unrelated that seems uncaring. It's not that ENTJs don't care. It's just that once a problem is out and "solved," it's time to move on.

### ***ENTJs as Leaders***

The ENTJ has been called life's natural leader, and that's not by accident. Their combination of preferences gives this type the right mixture of basic leadership qualities: enthusiasm, vision, objectivity, and accountability. These qualities are so natural that it is almost difficult for an ENTJ *not* to step in and take charge. And they do it with such finesse that others tend to appreciate it and begin to depend on them. More often than not, the ENTJ is pleased to respond.

Even when they don't try to step into a leadership role, it is often thrust upon them. They can be very effective and successful "take charge" resources when projects or initiatives need to get up and running quickly. When a group needs a leader, they can easily and competently fill that role.

With their natural leadership and systems-planning abilities, ENTJs often rise to upper levels of management fairly quickly. They may alienate some people along the way, but ENTJs believe that's just part of the price you have to pay to demonstrate your abilities and competence. Moreover, if you achieve your goals and have grown and learned in the process, then the alienation was not in vain. Because they approach interpersonal dilemmas objectively, they are surprised that anyone would be

hurt, disappointed, or intimidated by their aggressiveness. They don't understand why anyone would personalize an argument or competition that was, in their mind, well-intentioned and meant only to help everyone concerned grow.

Their leadership style is strategically oriented, with a vision and direction that is focused on achieving goals and solving problems in an intentional, planned manner. As leaders, they often thrive on complex and demanding situations. This motivates them to marshal their intellectual abilities to envision outcomes and plan both the tactics and strategies needed to reach a goal. Often seen as dominant and aggressive, they seek to influence through competence and commanding presence. But these strengths may derail their leadership efforts if their colleagues and subordinates experience condescension and intolerance for opposing views.

### ***ENTJs as Employees***

ENTJs have a gift for handling complexity and often excel at problem-solving. They often clearly see a viable solution to problems and will actively push the team in that direction. Their quick grasp of a situation can make a solution pop up earlier for them than for more deliberate, data-driven types. However, their early solution may not be warmly accepted by the team, especially if the ENTJ tries to ram it down their throats.

While they may go overboard and make even simple things complicated, their uncanny ability to arrange people and things in ways that motivate and inspire others is a rare and unique trait. ENTJs understand that success is measured in terms of what is accomplished, not in terms of how much someone is liked by others. As a result, they readily accept the hard reality that they may make enemies in making decisions for the good of the organization. Like all Thinking-Judgers (TJs), they would rather be right than liked.

ENTJs also have the ability to balance a vision of the future against potential risks. Because they are structure-oriented, they make better intrapreneurs (working innovatively within an organization) than entrepreneurs (working on one's own). In any case, their risk-taking is buffered by their need to produce bottom-line results. Unlike their ENTP cousins, who are prone to take more extreme risks – with bigger wins and bigger losses – their risks and rewards are more moderate.

ENTJs easily make decisions based on the organization and implementation of their strategy. To influence their decisions, present a logical argument about long-range implications and effectiveness. Don't confuse their decisiveness with being inflexible. They will quickly reprioritize because they don't want to waste time on things that won't get desired results. But they may need to build a new premise for their logic, so let them think about it.

### **ENTJs' Workplace Stressors**

ENTJs pride themselves on their independence, and it is a legacy they would like to give to their subordinates. They want staff to be independent, freethinking, and to disdain the "yes man" mentality. They believe it is better to have challenged and lost than to never have challenged at all. The problem is, not everyone wants to be independent and freethinking; some simply want to be told what to do. This frustrates ENTJs to no end and is very stressful. In an effort to ease this frustration,

ENTJs may become quite impatient and intimidating toward those who do not “measure up.” This dynamic can carry on every day, even to those who do meet the challenge. Those working with or for an ENTJ inevitably tire of this stress and wonder if there’s anything they can do right.

ENTJs’ biggest drawbacks are their arrogance, their impatience, and their insensitivity. Their objectivity and love for the abstract provides them with a healthy amount of intellectual competence; they usually do well in academic pursuits. But they tend to look down on those who don’t learn or make connections as readily as they do. Because they are Extraverted-Judgers (EJs), they aren’t shy about letting others know what they think of them. This arrogance is demeaning to staff and can cut into morale and productivity.

Similarly, because they have quick minds and readily see what needs to be done to move an organization or system forward, they can become abrasive when others aren’t equally perceptive. They often have a short fuse for those who want to delay action in favor of more careful review of a proposed plan. They are often right, and they know it. But they view the process of getting others on board as a waste of precious time.

Another stressful waste of time, in the ENTJ’s mind, is to have to beat around the bush when communicating with others. Their motto is, “Say what needs to be said, and let the chips fall where they may.” This directness, combined with their arrogance and impatience, can at best bruise egos and at worst cause insurrection. ENTJs may find people shunning them, often avoiding confrontations to escape their arrogance. They may be plagued by staff, family, and personal relationships in turmoil, leaving them with more time alone than their Extraversion (E) preference can deal with.

### ***ENTJs’ Careers***

ENTJs are natural architects, and this is one of the careers in which they abound. But they are not limited to designing buildings. They are equally capable in careers that allow them to design institutions, programs, systems, processes, even people’s lives. They make excellent teachers, CEOs, and strategists, whether in the military or in government. Their inquisitiveness makes them natural scientists, lawyers, and journalists.

### **Summary**

The ENTJ’s talents lie in developing policies, establishing plans, coordinating and sequencing events, and implementing strategies. They excel at directing others to reach goals dictated by their strong vision of the organization, and they thrive on marshaling forces to get plans put into action. Natural organization builders, they almost always find themselves taking charge in ineffective situations. They enjoy creating efficiently structured systems and setting priorities to achieve goals.

Adapted from the writing and teaching of Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen.

## **ENTJs On a Team**

### **Naturally Bring to a Team**

- A team player if that's what it takes to get the job done; their relationships are about mutual autonomy
- Develop policy, establish plans, coordinate events, and implement strategy
- Take a systems view of decision making, strategically analyzing to solve problems
- Marshal the forces and energize others to participate
- Use integrative thinking and objective critiquing of decisions, plans, and data

### **Teamwork Style**

- Direct others to reach goals
- Are results and action-oriented
- Typically take charge and command
- Focus on time and task, working toward achievement

### **Potential Blind Spots**

- May not praise or give feedback as often as others need it; overlook the human element
- Are quick to judge when others are seen as stupid or do not take responsibility for their actions
- Might become impatient and too controlling, especially when in a hurry for action
- May not recognize that limitations on a situation can slow progress toward an anticipated outcome

### **To Help Them Succeed**

- Allow them autonomy and encourage them to allow others to be autonomous and independent
- Provide recognition for achievements and competency from someone they judge competent
- Give logical reasons and rationale for following prescribed procedures
- Allow them the freedom to develop strategies

Adapted from [Quick Guide to the 16 Personality Types in Organizations](#) by Sue A. Cooper, Roger R. Pearman, et al.

## Managing the ENTJ

### WORK LABEL – FIELD MARSHAL

- Frank and decisive
- A natural leader
- Thinks on his/her feet
- Exudes confidence
- Well-informed

#### STRENGTHS

- Energetic
- Futuristic
- Conceptual
- Logical
- Dynamic

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

- Slow down, experience the present
- Spend time reflecting on values
- Make effort to praise others
- Be sensitive to others' needs
- Take care of routine and details

TO FUNCTION BEST ENTJs NEED: Mental challenges and interesting problems to solve.  
Recognition. Positive feedback and an absence of routine.  
Respect for ideas, especially their own.

ENTJs ARE FRUSTRATED BY: Emotional responses to rational situations. Routine and petty details. The inabilities and weaknesses of their co-workers. Lack of competence in themselves and others.  
Wasted time.

ENTJs IRRITATE OTHERS BY: Appearing arrogant. Inflated confidence and self-image. Being cold and impersonal. A lack of execution and attention to detail.

ENTJs VALUE: Intelligence, ideas, concepts, and expertise.

ON A TEAM: They are the leaders; they cannot not lead.